

**INSTITUTIONAL POLICY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**October 1, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Mary Lou Bates; Adrian Bautista; Joerg Bibow, Vice Chair; Marc Conner, Chair; Michelle Hubbs; Jina Mao; Donna Ng; Diane O'Connor; Jason Ohlberg; Michael Orr; Lori Parks; Joe Porter; Rik Scarce; Kurt Smemo; Joseph Stankovich; Dwane Sterling; Smriti Tiwari; Amy Tweedy; Joshua Woodfork; and Carey Anne Zucca.

**ABSENT:** Marta Brunner; Interim SGA President Issy Mejia '23; Vacant, SGA VP for Financial Affairs.

**GUESTS:** Assistant VP for Student Affairs and Director of Athletics and COVID-19 Logistics Working Group Co-Chair Gail Cummings-Danson.

**The meeting was held via Zoom** and called to order at 10:31 a.m. by Chair President Conner.

**1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from the May 14, 2021; July 19, 2021; September 10, 2021; and September 17, 2021 Meetings.**

A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes of May 14, July 19, September 10, and September 17, 2021.

With no proposed changes, **the minutes from the May 14, 2021; July 19, 2021; September 10, 2021 Meeting; and September 17, 2021 meetings were unanimously approved.**

**2. Fiscal Year '21 Actual Financial Results**

Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer Donna Ng provided an update on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 financial report that was last reviewed by IPPC at the April 30, 2021 meeting. At that time, the College estimated a slight above the line operating surplus of \$161K and a below the line surplus of \$872K. The IPPC Subcommittee on Budget and Finance recently reviewed the FY '21 actual results. VP Ng noted above the line revenue at \$148.7M with expenditures at \$147.6M, resulting in an above the line operating surplus of \$1.1M and an overall surplus of \$1.7M. She stated the actual surplus for FY'21 was impacted by greater than anticipated revenue from the Skidmore Fund at \$8.1M and a lower spending for COVID-19 related expenses with the primary line item being testing.

VP Ng reminded IPPC that "above the line" expenses and revenue are items that continue annually year after year based on a set student enrollment of 2350 students. Any student enrollments above that figure are considered "below the line." Any below the line budget surplus cannot be used to offset future "operating" expenses nor to fund ongoing expenses such as salaries. In the past, surpluses have been allocated to fund one-time capital expenditures. Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity Joshua Woodfork emphasized the importance of being as transparent as possible as to where surplus money is utilized and why it is being designated in that way so that the community is aware.

### **3. Fiscal Year '22 Budget Update**

VP Ng addressed the FY '22 budget. She stated that the College again will be impacted by COVID-19 expenses and the loss of summer revenue. The FY'22 budget assumes regular in person operations for all of academic year (AY) 2021-2022, a 2.5% in general salary adjustment (GSA) for faculty and non-union staff, and 2% for union staff (negotiated via bargaining). In addition, with the uncertainty of COVID-19 in the Spring, the budget included \$2M in contingency rather than the typical \$1M.

VP Ng reported that current revenue assumptions are based on the current first-year class size of 720, an overall student population of 2684 in the Fall and a discount rate of 43.3%. VP Ng reminded IPPC of the detailed modeling that supports these figures and the benchmarking and monitoring of the discount rate that occurs with our peer institutions. It was noted that the contingency for FY '22 is now estimated at \$1M vs. \$2M for FY '21 because \$1M was needed to fund COVID-19 related expenses such as testing, tents, and isolation rooms. The current assumption is in Spring '22, the College will not need additional COVID-19 related expenses.

Given the current revenue and expenditure estimates, the operating budget for FY '22 is expected to be at a slight above the line surplus of \$252K. It is anticipated we will have a below the line surplus, currently estimated in the area of \$6M although the actual figure will be in flux all year as multiple parameters shift and change. The below the line operating surplus is largely due to over enrollment of 145 (spread across all class years) students this year. It was asked why Skidmore would not want to add that figure to make a new target for above the line operating expenses. Vice President and Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Mary Lou Bates responded that on occasion with the support of the Board of Trustees the College has increased the budgeted enrollment numbers. However, the past few years have proven to be challenging to enroll students while maintaining all the important metrics in the class, coupled with the tremendous pressures on the financial aid budget. President Conner added that increasing the numbers would commit Skidmore to meeting those targets year after year as budgets would be based on these enrollments and not meeting them would result in a calamitous problematic deficit.

VP Ng again stressed that below line revenue and expenses are largely based on one-time occurrences and that these funds cannot be used for offsetting future operating expenses, but are typically used for capital projects. President Conner added that in the spring the FY '22 budget will be revisited and by that time that surplus number will certainly change. Any surpluses will need to be looked at very strategically as how to best support our top priorities. The capital budget for FY '22 is set at \$11M with no plans of withholding a portion of the funding as was done in FY'21.

### **4. Update on City of Saratoga Springs Hockey Rink Locker Rooms**

VP Ng referenced the [IPPC meeting of February 28, 2020](#) at which a Board of Trustees update was provided, including referencing future work on the City of Saratoga Springs ice rink for Skidmore hockey team locker rooms. The Board approved an investment of \$1.5M towards the locker rooms and facilities, which had been long planned as part of the College's capital budget. Skidmore will continue to pay for ice time in the way that we currently do. Skidmore will have a long-term lease with the City, providing exclusive use of the additional locker room space. The

addition is scheduled to be built on City land and subject to City building guidelines. Re-start of the project begins with approval from the Saratoga Springs City Council at its upcoming October 5, 2021 meeting.

IPPC members voiced concern over prioritizing this particular athletics project, and capital spending in a period where we are looking at staff and faculty cuts and financial challenges in the short term. President Conner remarked that our current campus master planning work will enable Skidmore to acquire a tangible baseline sense of all our campus facilities, including access to the health, wellness, and athletic fitness needs for the whole campus community. He reminded the committee of the pressures on admissions and the importance of facilities in recruitment, as well as the difficulty of comparing facilities needs across sports when there's so much variation in that area.

### **5. Calendar Year '22 Healthcare Premium Announcement of Rate**

VP Ng provided an update on healthcare premiums for calendar year (CY) 2022. Beginning January 1, 2022, premiums for CY '22 will be increased by 8.1%. The last two years, the College capped the premium rate increase at 10%. Historically, employee premiums have increased at a rate of 5%, but healthcare costs have risen dramatically recently.

VP Ng reminded IPPC that implementing recommendations from the Healthcare Working Group (HWG) will be done over a few years through FY '24. The implementation action plan was recently reviewed at the IPPC Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting. The subcommittee recommended that in FY'22 the College bid and negotiate stop loss rates (through our Healthcare Plan provider, MVP), re-evaluate the insurance captive for stop loss, and execute a multi-channel education program throughout the year on the value of the optional Health Savings Accounts and High Deductible Health Plans, which will be offered to employees in CY '23. IPPC members applauded offering workshops regarding new options. President Conner once again thanked the HWG for their focus on transparency and agreed with the outreach in guiding employees through this personal process. Open enrollment is tentatively planned for November 3-17.

### **6. Fall Semester '21 COVID-19 Planning**

President Conner stated that we currently stand at 21 active student Covid-19 cases. Even with our incredibly high vaccination rate, the numbers are not unexpected given the highly transmissible Delta variant and the incidence of breakthrough cases continuing to occur across our peer college campuses and local, national, and global communities.

COVID-19 Logistics Working Group Co-Chair Donna Ng stated that the group has been working diligently this semester preparing for a wide range of scenarios, as well as to assess what may be possible in the coming months. The College continues to "err" on the side of caution and is working to be preemptive in its response to any increases in the number of active cases, most recently implementing use of the co-verified app on student's phones and other safety measures. The key is to provide timely and accurate communication and to remain flexible in the face of a constantly changing situation.

Assistant VP for Student Affairs and Director of Athletics and COVID-19 Logistics Working Group Co-Chair Gail Cummings-Danson stated that the group is already planning ahead for the

Thanksgiving Break scheduled for November 24 – 28. At this time, it is expected that students will return to the campus and classroom post-break. Testing schedules for students are being worked out, as well as consideration of employee testing upon returning to campus. Currently the vast majority of students are being tested once a week. Monitoring of the testing is conducted via the co-verified app at major access points on campus, including the Dining Hall and Athletics Center. The COVID-19 transmission rate in Saratoga County remains “high” as classified by the Centers for Disease Control requiring masking requirements and protocols for everyone, regardless of vaccination status.

It was asked if updated contact tracing data continued to show zero cases being traced back to classroom interactions. Co-Chair Cummings-Danson stated that data has shown no evidence that there is any transmission happening in the classroom. Transmission appears to be occurring in social settings either on- or off-campus for students, and off-campus for faculty and staff. All faculty, staff, and students are urged to get tested if they are experiencing any COVID-19-like symptoms. VP Woodfork reminded IPPC of the social norms regarding COVID-19, how we use our own social sphere of influence to be influencers in keeping our community safe, remind folks of our institutional values, and of our collective responsibility to take care of one another.

IPPC members reported that faculty, staff, and students are incredibly excited about being back on campus. The enthusiasm from students and faculty in response to being back in the classroom is palpable. Students are excited about being able to engage face-to-face in and out of the classroom. President Conner added that we are more interconnected than we may realize and as we continue to engage this semester in campus master planning to remember that our planning goes way beyond just bricks and mortar.

## **7. Other Business**

VP Woodfork stated the IPPC meeting dates for the academic year 2021-2022 have been posted to the IPPC website. He asked those who are chairing or co-chairing subcommittees to please review the posted membership information. He noted that some committees are still waiting for student members.

In response to a member’s question of any updates on the transphobia demands, VP Woodfork explained that administrators are compiling information from various offices around campus and that he and Associate Dean of Students Mariel Martin have reached back to the student organizers to request a meeting in order to share what we have learned.

Meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

*Please inform the President’s Office of any changes to these minutes.*